



Human Development & Family Science
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Master of Science in Child Life PROGRAM HANDBOOK

REVISED

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<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-programs-m.s.-child-life>

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS). The goal of our graduate program is to promote the integration of knowledge and professional practice in human development and family science. To accomplish this goal students achieve three objectives: (1) to develop expertise in integrating and applying substantive and theoretical knowledge in individual development across the life course and family relationships; (2) to learn advanced analytic skills and methodologies for conducting and disseminating research on individuals and families; and (3) to develop the skills necessary to translate basic research into application through outreach, clinical practice, or preventative interventions.

The department offers four degrees: (1) A Master of Science in HDFS as part of the University of Georgia's 5-year Double Dawgs program; (2) A Master of Science in Child Life; (3) A Masters of Science in Couple and Family Therapy and (3) A Doctor of Philosophy in HDFS. It is also possible to pursue a doctorate in HDFS with an emphasis in Couples and Family Therapy.

This handbook is designed to guide you as you plan your career as a Master's student in Child Life in the Department of Human Development and Family Science. It is organized according to the major programmatic milestones you will encounter.

This handbook is also intended to inform HDFS graduate students and faculty about basic policies and procedures related to the Master of Science in Child Life program. Like all graduate programs at UGA, the Master of Science in Child Life program in HDFS operates within an administrative structure established by the Graduate School. It is the responsibility of all faculty and graduate students to familiarize themselves with the relevant Graduate School policies. Because it does not cover all University regulations governing graduate education at the University of Georgia, it should be treated as a supplement to the following:

- Graduate School Bulletin, <https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-policies/>
- Theses and Dissertations Student Guide to Preparation and Processing, <https://grad.uga.edu/development/academic/theses-dissertations-overview/>
- Graduate School's Academic Regulations and Procedures, <https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-policies>

Although every effort is made to provide accurate and current information in this handbook, the Department reserves the right to change statements in the handbook concerning policies, curricula, or other matters. Students enrolled in the graduate program agree to comply with the Department's rules and regulations and to accommodate any changes necessary.

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1.1 UGA Mission Statement

The University of Georgia shares with the other research universities of the University System of Georgia the following core characteristics:

- a statewide responsibility and commitment to excellence and academic achievements having national and international recognition;
- a commitment to excellence in a teaching/learning environment dedicated to serving a diverse and well-prepared student body, to promoting high levels of student achievement, and to providing appropriate academic support services;
- a commitment to excellence in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors that are focused on organized programs to create, maintain, and apply new knowledge and theories; that promote instructional quality and effectiveness; and that enhance institutionally relevant faculty qualifications;
- a commitment to excellence in public service, economic development, and technical assistance activities designed to address the strategic needs of the state of Georgia along with a comprehensive offering of continuing education designed to meet the needs of Georgia's citizens in life-long learning and professional education;
- a wide range of academic and professional programming at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels.

Source: <https://bulletin.uga.edu/UnivInfo/content/university-info-landing.html>

1.2 Links to HDFS, UGA, and Graduate School policies and resources

Policy	Link
HDFS Forms	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-for-current-students
UGA MS Policy	https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/By-h7LoKp
UGA PhD Policy	https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/Hycl4UoKa
Graduate Policies	https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-policies
Academic Honesty Policy	https://honesty.uga.edu/
Responsible Conduct in Research Policy	https://research.uga.edu/integrity-support/rcr/
Sexual Discrimination and Harassment Policy	https://eoo.uga.edu/laws-policies-and-regulations/civil-rights-and-ndah/non-discrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy/
Grievance Policy	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/faculty_staff_resources/facs-guidelines-for-resolving-problems-grievances-and-disagreements#top
Grade Appeal Policy	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/ssac/academic-resources-academic-appeals
Leave of Absence Policy	https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/BydQdw_u6
Disability Resources	https://accessibility.uga.edu

International Students Life	https://cgcse.uga.edu/gse/
Student Success and Well-being	https://grad.uga.edu/student-success-well-being/

2. Master of Science in Child Life Program

Child Life Program Goal. To prepare students for professional practice in child life by integrating knowledge of child and family development with theory, research, and clinical application in healthcare settings.

Child Life Program Objectives. To accomplish this goal, students will achieve the following objectives:

- A. Develop expertise in understanding and applying theoretical and empirical knowledge related to child and family development in healthcare settings.
- B. Gain proficiency in child life theory, research methodologies, and evidence-based interventions to support children and families in medical environments.
- C. Acquire clinical competencies necessary for implementing therapeutic play, procedural support, and family-centered care in child life practice.

Student Learning Outcomes. Upon completion of the curriculum and program of study requirements, students are expected to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

- **Outcome 1. Therapeutic Play:** First-year students will demonstrate the ability to plan and facilitate therapeutic play activities in child life practicum and internship settings.
- **Outcome 2. Clinical Competence:** Second-year students will demonstrate proficiency in child life clinical skills, including assessment, intervention, and family-centered care.

To achieve these objectives and outcomes, all Master of Science in Child Life students are required to complete:

1. The Human Development and Family Science and child life coursework outlined in the program of study (see Appendix A1)
2. A supervised child life practicum and internship to develop applied clinical skills
3. Research and applied learning experiences that contribute to professional competency in child life

2.1 Benefit of a MS in Child Life Degree in Human Development and Family Science

There are many benefits to pursuing the study of child life within the Department of Human Development and Family Science. Students in this program learn about and apply research skills to their areas of interest, and learn clinical skills directly related to child life, preparing them to work in both the child life and the broader human development and family science fields.

Endorsed Academic Program to Prepare Future Certified Child Life Specialists. A Master of Science in Child Life within the Department of Human Development and Family Science will be beneficial for students pursuing a career in the field of child life by providing an in-depth education on developmental issues and important topics concerning children and families. Additionally, students in this program will receive education on child life theory, practice, and application within the field. After meeting the program of study requirements, students will apply for and complete an in-depth internship under a Certified Child Life Specialist. The Master of Science in Child Life program at the University of Georgia is endorsed by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) and works in congruence with the ACLP requirements for becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist. Upon completion of both the educational requirements and internship, students will graduate and be eligible to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Examination.

Research and Clinical Practice in the UGA MS in Child Life Program. Research is an integral part of all graduate students' training, including for those students who hope to pursue clinical careers in child life. Various research and analytical skills are taught and refined throughout the students' studies, which include research presentations and completion of a thesis or a clinical project. These analytical skills will help students solve real-world problems and understand how to read and interpret research, how to analyze and respond to patient and family issues in the clinical setting (the "why" behind clinical practice), and how to conduct research that contributes to the child life field.

2.2 Timeline for Completing the Program

Many circumstances affect the length of time necessary for a student to complete a master's degree. The program is designed so that, under ordinary conditions, students with a bachelor's degree can expect to complete their master's degree in two years, including summers.

All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years beginning with the first registration for graduate courses on the program of study. An extension of time may be granted by the Graduate School only for conditions beyond the control of the individual.

2.3 Continuous Enrollment Requirement

The Graduate Enrollment Policy specifies that, "All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated." Graduate School enrollment policies can be found at <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/Hyckuv006>.

3. Advisory Committee

The advisory committee, in consultation with the student, is charged with planning and approving the student's program of study, reading and approving the Master's thesis (*if applicable*), arranging the comprehensive written and oral examinations, advising the student on required research skills, approving the subject for the dissertation, approving the completed dissertation, and approving the defense of the student's research. The committee must consist of a minimum of three members, including your major professor, who will serve as the chair of the committee.

Selection of the Advisory Committee should be done before approval of your program of study, preferably in your first year since matriculation into the program (also referred to as "residency"). Before the end of the first year of residence and upon the recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies, the dean of the Graduate School shall appoint an advisory committee for the student. The committee will be recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School by the Director of Graduate Studies after consultation with the student and faculty members involved.

Sources:

- MS: <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/By-h7LoKp>

Before the end of your 2nd semester in residency (spring term, first year), the student is responsible for completing the Advisory Committee form in their Enrolled Student Progress Portal.

For instructions on how to do so, go to:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Advisory_Committee_Instructions.pdf

3.1 Initial Advisor

When students enter the Master of Science in Child Life program, they are assigned a child life faculty member as their initial advisor. The initial advisor provides guidance for the student's educational experience during the first year in the program. The initial advisor will sign necessary forms and answer questions about the program, policies, and other issues. Meeting frequently with the initial advisor will help ease the student's transition into the graduate program.

3.2 Major Professor

During the first year in the program, students will formalize their relationship with a major professor, who will guide them through their thesis or clinical project. In most cases, the initial advisor will continue as the student's major professor for students completing clinical projects. Depending on the student's topic of interest and faculty expertise and availability, students may request a major professor other than their initial advisor. For students completing a master's thesis, the major professor should be a faculty member familiar with the student's research interests and available and willing to mentor that research; this may be a faculty member in HDFS who is outside child life. All decisions about major professors should be finalized by the end of the spring semester of the first year.

3.3 Advisory Committee

The advisory committee is a group of faculty members who work with each student to review work, provide feedback, and certify that the student has successfully completed specific program requirements, including the thesis or clinical project and online portfolio of professional activities. The advisory committee is typically made up of 3 faculty members in the Department of Human

Development and Family Science. Your major professor is one of these advisory committee members, and will serve as the chair of the committee. The advisory committee, in consultation with the student, is charged with approving the student's program of study, approving the proposal for the thesis/clinical project, approving the completed thesis/clinical project, approving the defense of the student's work, and approving the student's online portfolio of professional accomplishments.

Students should work with their major professor to identify possible advisory committee members. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to faculty and ask them to be on the student's advisory committee. Advisory committee members should be finalized no later than the first month of your second year of the program. Students who have secured their advisory committee members sooner can submit the online form to the graduate school earlier.

Master's Advisory Committee Members. The master's advisory committee must consist of a *minimum of three members*. The chair and at least one other member must be members of the graduate program faculty of the University of Georgia. The third member may be a member of the graduate program faculty or a person with a terminal degree holding one of the following ranks at the University of Georgia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, public service assistant, public service associate, senior public service associate, assistant research scientist, associate research scientist, or senior research scientist. A UGA employee who holds one of these ranks or who holds a terminal degree in his/her field may be appointed as a third member upon approval by the departmental graduate program faculty and the dean of the Graduate School. The third member can also be a non-UGA faculty member with a terminal degree in his/her field of study. No more than one non-UGA committee member may be appointed as a voting member. If there are more than three members on the committee, a majority of UGA graduate program faculty members must be maintained.

Source: <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/By-h7LoKp>

Persons having the following ranks may not serve as voting members of graduate committees: instructors, lecturers, and academic professionals. However, these individuals may serve as non-voting members of a committee. If there are more than three members, there must be greater than 50% graduate program faculty representation. At least two committee members must be from the Department of Human Development and Family Science.

Non-Affiliated Persons on Advisory Committees. In addition to the regular committee members, a person having no official relationship with UGA may serve as a voting member on the advisory committee of a graduate student after nomination by the Director of Graduate Studies and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. When nominating a non-affiliated person, the Director of Graduate Studies must submit the nominee's current resume/CV with an Advisory Committee form and a letter addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School explaining why the services of the non-affiliated person are requested. A nominee must have a terminal degree in their field and distinguished academic credentials in the field of study. A non-affiliated person appointed to a graduate student's committee must attend meetings associated with the appointment. Compensation, if required, must be provided by the department that requested the appointment. A graduate student may not contribute to the compensation of a non-affiliated committee member.

Source: <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/rJeeUj-1R>

3.4 Change a committee member or major professor

While it is ideal that the advisory committee remain consistent, replacing and/or adding members of the advisory committee are sometimes necessary (e.g., shifts in student's interests and faculty expertise needed; faculty members leave UGA). Changes in the advisory committee may occur before or after the proposal meeting, but must be completed prior to the final defense of the master's thesis or clinical project. Students are encouraged to consult with their major professor, and if needed with the Director of Graduate Studies, prior to formalizing these changes.

Replacements for members of the advisory committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School prior to their service in any capacity.

To remove or add members to your Advisory Committee in Enrolled Student Progress Portal, follow the instructions provided at

[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Advisory Committee Instructions.pdf](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Advisory%20Committee%20Instructions.pdf)

3.5 Forms

Form Name	Due	Link
Advisory Committee	<i>Before the end of your 2nd semester in residency</i>	Follow instructions provided in: https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Advisory Committee Instructions.pdf

4. Curriculum and Program of Study

4.1 Coursework Requirements

The departmental program of study for MS in Child Life students includes research methods and statistics, advanced theory, and courses that are specific to the ACLP requirements. The core curriculum for the master's degree is 36 hours of course credit. (Note: HDFS 8910 and 7005 do not count toward this total.) All courses required for the program of study that are offered in the department must be taken in the department, except electives.

All MS in Child Life students are expected to take the core classes (HDFS 6100, 6640, 6800, and 7170), classes on child development (HDFS 6080 and 6910), classes specific to the child life field (HDFS 6810, 6820, 6830, and 7130S), Professional Seminar (8910), GradFirst Seminar (GRSC 7001), one elective, thesis or clinical project hours, and practicum and internship hours. Child life students can choose a thesis option or a non-thesis option. Students should discuss these options with their Major Professor and advisory committee.

While it is permissible for master's students to take 8000- and 9000-level classes, the Graduate School mandates that the *majority* of coursework on the master's program of study forms should be at the 6000- and 7000-level.

4.2 Timing of Courses

A Recommended Timeline of Course Scheduling of study for Child Life students is displayed in Appendix A1.

4.3 Partial Plan Program of Study

A partial plan program of study will be entered into DegreeWorks by the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA) that includes the required core courses during your **first two semesters** in the program. This will be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and your Major Professor before your first semester in the program.

4.4 Full Plan Program of Study

Before the end of your 2nd semester in residency (spring term, 1st year). you should present a full *plan* program of study to your major professor and your advisory committee (if applicable). The major professor will verify that the course work you plan to take will meet both the departmental and graduate school program of study requirements.

Your full plan program of study should include **all courses** you have taken during your first year **and** plan to take throughout the program, with the exception of HDFS 7005. This also includes all Directed Study (HDFS 7010), Research (HDFS 7000), and Thesis (HDFS 7300).

Once you, your major professor, and committee have agreed on a full plan program of study, it should be emailed to the GPA and DGS (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu) for review and departmental records. Courses included on your approved, full plan program of study will be entered into DegreeWorks by the GPA before the start of your 3rd semester in residency (fall term, 2nd year). This plan will be

routed for approval from your committee (if on thesis-track), the Director of Graduate Studies, then the Graduate School.

Changes to the program of study can be made at anytime, however they must be approved and entered into DegreeWorks BEFORE the semester in which you plan to enroll in a new course that was not originally documented on your full plan program of study. Updates should be made in consultation with your major professor and committee, and submitted to the GPA and DGS (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu) for final approval and documentation.

For more information regarding DegreeWorks requirements, visit:
<https://reg.uga.edu/academics/degreeworks/dgw-for-graduate-students/>

4.5 Completing the Departmental Program of Study Form

To ensure that the full plan program of study the GPA will enter into DegreeWorks includes all required courses, please follow the steps below,

1. **Before** the online form is submitted, submit a completed copy of the program of study document to your major professor and committee. This document should reflect course work that were approved by the major professor and committee as well as the final grade earned in each course (if completed). You must show all graduate courses relevant to the program of study and not just courses satisfying the minimum degree requirement, with the exception of HDFS. The major professor and committee will verify that the course work listed meets both the departmental and graduate school program of study requirements.
2. Once approved, submit the final program of study word document to the to the Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu) for review and departmental records. The Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Administrator will follow-up if there are any questions or concerns.
3. The Graduate Program Administrator will submit the updates through the DegreeWorks system and circulate the plan for approval. The plan will first be approved by the major professor, advisory committee (if on thesis-track), and the Director of Graduate Studies, then the Graduate School will have the final review. The Graduate School's review of the online final program of study form verifies that all program of study requirements have been approved.

This plan can be revised at any time if courses need to be removed or added. Revisions to the full plan require approval from the major professor, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate School.

4.6 Research Methodology Requirements

You are expected to develop an understanding of research methods and demonstrate competence in their use. Required courses include HDFS 6800: Research Methods and HDFS 7170: Introduction to Applied Statistics in HDFS. Students who already have taken a graduate-level research methods or statistics course prior to beginning the program may formally request to opt out of specific courses listed in the curriculum. If a student is requesting to opt out of research methods or statistics, that student must submit official transcripts and course syllabi to the Director of Graduate Studies for proof of proficiency.

4.7 Professional Seminar

All HDFS Child Life students are required to take 1 hour of HDFS 8910: Professional Development Seminar during fall and spring semesters each year they are enrolled. The seminar addresses issues related to the child life graduate program.

4.8 Timeline of Program Requirements

When (Yr, Sem)	Departmental Requirement	Handbook Section
1, SP	Confirm major professor	3.2
1, SP	Confirm advisory committee	3.3
1, SP	Submit full plan program of study	4.0
2, FA	Propose thesis/clinical project	5.0
2, SP	Apply for internships	6.3
2, SP	Finalize full plan program of study	4.0
2, SU	Apply for MS graduation	10.0
2, SP	Announce MS thesis/clinical project defense	5.0
2, SP	Defend MS thesis/clinical project	5.0
2, SP	Submit MS thesis to graduate school	5.0

4.9 Forms

Form Name	<i>Due</i>	Link
Recommended Timeline of Course Scheduling		https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Approved_MSCL_Program_of_Study_-_2_options_(January_2024)_1.pdf
Preliminary Program of Study	<i>By end of your 1st semester in residency.</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/POS_MS-CL.docx
Final Program of Study	<i>Prior to defending master's thesis or clinical project</i>	https://degreeworks.uga.edu/

5. Thesis or Clinical Project

All students in the MS in Child Life program will complete a master's thesis or a clinical project.

5.1 Master's Thesis

A thesis requires students to apply research and critical thinking skills to a research question of interest within their field. Students who select the thesis option must propose their thesis to their committee members, complete the research project and write a thesis manuscript, and pass a defense with their committee members to be eligible to graduate.

5.2 Steps to Complete a Master's Thesis

1. **Thesis Proposal.** Students must obtain approval from their advisory committee for the thesis they wish to write. Students will create a written proposal that includes an introduction, review of relevant literature and theory, and a description of planned research methods and data analysis procedures. Students will share their written proposal with their advisory committee at least 2 weeks before their proposal meeting. At the proposal meeting, students will present their proposed project, answer faculty questions, and receive feedback to refine the project as appropriate. The student must obtain the advisory committee's approval of the thesis proposed before moving forward with the thesis research.

Upon approval, the student is responsible for completing the **Approval of Thesis Proposal form (see Appendix B1)** and submitting the signed form to the Graduate Program Administrator:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS_E1_Approval_of_Thesis_Proposal.docx

2. **Conduct Thesis Research.** After receiving approval from the advisory committee, students will conduct the agreed-upon research, including data collection as needed, data analysis, interpretation, and writing of the thesis. The student will work closely with the major professor throughout this process and will seek feedback from the advisory committee as needed.
3. **Manuscript Style Thesis.** All students are encouraged to complete a *single manuscript style* thesis. The ultimate goal is to publish this manuscript as first-author, thus fulfilling the first portfolio requirement for the doctoral program.

In accordance with the graduate school guidelines, the organization of the main-body sections for the theses will include four chapters followed by a reference list: (1) Introduction and Literature Review, (2) Methods, (3) Results, and (4) Discussion. After defending the thesis and submitting it to the graduate school, the student should re-format the manuscript in accordance with the guidelines specified by the scholarly journal the student intends to submit to for rigorous blind-peer review.

For specific guidance on formatting your thesis, visit the graduate school website, <https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-bulletin/theses-dissertations-overview/>, and review *Theses and Dissertations: Student Guide to Preparation and Processing* published by the Graduate School: <https://grad.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/theses-and-dissertations-STYLE-GUIDE-2025.pdf>

4. **Preparation for Final Defense.** When the Major Professor is satisfied with the completed thesis, they will certify that it has their approval and is ready to be read by the Advisory Committee. The copies of the thesis will then to be distributed to the remaining members of the Advisory Committee and a final oral defense will be scheduled. The committee members will have 2-3 weeks to read and evaluate the completed thesis. Written assent of two of the three committee members will be required before it is approved as ready for a final defense. If the Advisory Committee declines to approve the thesis as ready for the final defense, they will determine the steps, strategies, and/or guidelines in preparing the thesis for the final defense.
5. **ETD Format Check Submission.** While the advisory committee reviews the thesis, the student should also submit a copy to the graduate school for format check in accordance with deadlines posted on the graduate school website. The format check must be completed before you can submit the final, official copy.

For more information and instructions, visit:

<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=1003>

6. **Announcement of Thesis Defense.** The student is responsible for contacting members of the advisory committee to schedule a date and time for the final defense. Scheduling well in advance is strongly recommended because student and faculty schedules become very full near the end of each semester.

*At least two full weeks before the date of the defense of your thesis, the student must submit to the Graduate Program Administrator the **Request for the Announcement of Master's Defense form (see Appendix B2):***

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS E2 Request for the Announcement of Master Defense.docx>

No notification to the Graduate School is needed for master's students.

7. **Final Defense Meeting.** In accordance with the graduate school policy, the defense of the thesis will be chaired by the student's major professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. *The defense can be held completely remotely if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head.*

The advisory committee must approve the student's thesis and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the thesis must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester.

The student is responsible for completing the **Approval Form for Master's Thesis and Final Oral Examination (for MS and MA) (G140) in Grad Status:**

<https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G140>. This form should be completed by the student prior to the final thesis defense date, and approved by the committee immediately following the

defense.

8. **Final Thesis Submission.** The Graduate School must receive the **Final Defense Approval form** and an electronic submission of the corrected thesis *no later than two weeks prior to graduation*. The thesis must be submitted via the web in electronic PDF format and must conform to the Graduate School requirements outlined in the **ETD Submission Approval (G129) form**: <https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G129>.

5.3 Clinical Project

A clinical project is an in-depth applied project to address an identified community need in collaboration with an organization. The clinical project requires a literature review, a written proposal, completion of an in-depth project that will be useful in the human development and family science field, and a written report. This is a rigorous, research-based project, completed in collaboration with a hospital, child life specialist, or other community partner under the direction of the student's major professor and committee. The clinical project applies a review of substantive literature and relevant theory to a problem of an applied nature in a clinical setting. The process for a clinical project closely follows that of a thesis. Students pick a topic for the project in collaboration with a community partner, complete a comprehensive literature review, propose the project to the committee, complete the project and a written report, and defend the project and report. The student's committee will evaluate the project based on its comprehensiveness, completeness, and appropriateness in relation to professional work in the student's area of interest.

5.4 Steps to Complete a Clinical Project

A clinical project is an in-depth applied project to use research evidence to address an identified community need, in collaboration with a hospital or other organization.

The following are the basic steps to complete a clinical project. Students who choose a clinical project are strongly encouraged to identify a Major Professor early in the spring of their first year of study, and to discuss options for the project with the Major Professor as early as possible. Keep in mind that a clinical project is a rigorous, research-based effort to create an in-depth project that will have practical application in the Human Development and Family Science field.

1. **Choose a collaborating organization and identify a contact at that organization.** Collaborating organizations could be a hospital, a group of child life specialists with interest in a particular topic, a camp serving children with health care needs, or a community-based organization that serves children with physical and/or mental health needs.
2. **Identify a Major Professor and advisory committee.** Discuss clinical project ideas with your Major Professor, the Child Life Director, and/or the Child Life Coordinator as early in your program of study as possible. When you have selected your Major Professor and advisory committee members, and they have agreed to serve, get the appropriate signatures on the departmental form.
3. **Meet with your organization contact** (in person if possible) and discuss needs of the organization that you could help meet. You could develop a set of therapeutic activities, a guide for parents and/or patients to meet a specific need, or any other in-depth resource that helps further the mission of the organization.

4. **Choose a specific topic.** Discuss the topic with your Major Professor and organization contact to ensure that it is appropriate for a clinical project and that it meets the community's needs. This is also an appropriate time to discuss any specifications the organization has (e.g., specific colors or formats), and to identify people related to the organization who could review the project and provide feedback.
5. **Review the research literature related to your topic.** This includes identifying a theoretical model that you will use to guide your work, as well as specific literature about the topic that is relevant to your work.
6. **Write a clinical project proposal.** Your Major Professor will guide you in this process. Your proposal should include the following sections:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Literature Review (including theory)
 - c. Method
 - d. Description of collaborating organization
 - e. Description of proposed project (with specific outline if possible)
 - f. Proposed method of collecting reviews from collaborating organization
7. **Hold a proposal meeting** with your committee to formally propose your project. Your proposal meeting should be scheduled with your advisory committee members as early as possible. Your committee should receive a copy of your proposal about two weeks in advance of the meeting. During the proposal, you will use slides to summarize your literature review and proposed project. Committee members will ask questions and make recommendations related to your proposal.
[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL Approval of Clinical Project Proposal.docx](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL%20Approval%20of%20Clinical%20Project%20Proposal.docx)
8. **Develop your clinical project** in collaboration with the organization.
9. **Conduct a readability analysis** to determine whether the reading level of your project is appropriate for the audience. Make edits if needed to achieve an appropriate reading level. Readability analyses can be conducted using Microsoft Word and/or online tools.
10. **Collect reviews of the clinical project** from your collaborating organization, based on the review plan you included in your proposal. Review the comments and make revisions as needed to address reviewers' issues.
11. **Complete a final clinical project report.** This should be an expanded version of your proposal, including literature review, a description of the collaborating organization and project, a summary of reviews you received, and modifications made to address the reviews, a summary of your readability analyses, a description of how the completed project will be shared with the collaborating organization, and information about how the organization will use and distribute the completed clinical project.
12. **Schedule a final defense of your clinical project with** your committee members. Complete the **Request for Announcement of Thesis/Clinical Project Defense form** and return it to the department contact so your defense can be announced at least 2 weeks in advance,
[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS E2 Request for the Announcement of Master Def](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS%20E2%20Request%20for%20the%20Announcement%20of%20Master%20Def)

[ense.docx](#). Your committee should receive a copy of your paper and completed clinical project about two weeks in advance of the meeting.

- 13. Hold your final defense.** Bring copies of the Departmental **M.S. Non-Thesis Clinical Project Presentation and Exam Form** to your defense, [https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL Nonthesis Clinial Project Approval Form.docx](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_Nonthesis_Clinial_Project_Approval_Form.docx). Your committee will sign that form upon successful completion of your defense.

Note: These steps refer only to the clinical project itself. It is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with the Major Professor, to ensure that all required steps are completed prior to Graduate School deadlines. Other steps to consider include committee approval of the Program of Study, completion and committee approval of the Master's Portfolio, and application for graduation

5.5 Forms

Form Name	Due	Link
Advisory Committee	<i>Before the end of your 2nd semester in residency</i>	Follow instructions provided in: https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Advisory Committee Instructions.pdf
Approval of Thesis Proposal	<i>Upon approval of thesis proposal</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS E1 Approval of Thesis Proposal.docx
Request for the Announcement of Master's Defense	<i>At least two full weeks before the date of the defense of your thesis</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS E2 Request for the Announcement of Master Defense.docx
Master's Thesis and Final Oral Examination (G140)	<i>Submitted prior to final defense date. Completed and received by graduate school at least 2 weeks prior to graduation.</i>	https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G140
ETD Submission Approval (G129)	<i>See graduate school website for deadlines.</i>	https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G129
M.S. Approval of Clinical Project Proposal	<i>Upon approval of clinical project proposal.</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL Approval of Clinical Project Proposal.docx
M.S. Non-Thesis Clinical Project Presentation and Exam Form	<i>After successful defense of clinical project.</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL Nonthesis Clinial Project Approval Form.docx

6. Pre-Clinical and Clinical Experiences in Child Life

6.1 Volunteering

Child life graduate students balance coursework and applied practicum experiences during their fall and spring semesters. In addition, volunteer work is an excellent way to gain experience with children of different ages and abilities, to learn more about child life and child development, and to gain experience that will make students more competitive candidates for child life internships. Students in the child life program are encouraged to participate in volunteer work throughout their graduate studies, especially during the summer of between their first and second years.

There are many local opportunities for volunteer work that allow students to apply their knowledge and develop applied skills. Possible volunteer options include child life programs at hospitals near Athens (and in other locations during the summer), early care and education programs at the Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center and at other locations. Other options include working with children and youth at specialized programs such as Extra Special People, and summer camps for children with chronic illnesses such as Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge, GA; Camp Will-A-Way in Winder, GA; Aurora Day Camp in Atlanta, GA; and Camp Sunshine in Atlanta, GA, as well as summer camps for typically developing children at a wide variety of locations around the country.

6.2 Child Life Practicum

The goal of a practicum is to enable students to gain appropriate experiences to prepare them to obtain and complete a child life internship. Students will gain knowledge in the field of child life by completing practicum experiences under the supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist at a hospital or other clinical setting. A child life practicum is primarily an observational experience.

Each student will register for a practicum during one semester of their graduate coursework. Practicum experiences will include traveling to the site at least twice weekly to shadow Certified Child Life Specialists. During the practicum, students will gain approximately 120 hours of observational experience in a clinical setting. Students will typically have practicum experience in multiple units in order to experience a variety of child life interventions. Students will also complete assignments to be turned in to their on-site practicum supervisor. During the practicum, students will have the opportunity to observe clinical skills important for child life, such as assessing patient needs, evaluating coping, and developing interventions to support children and families in the healthcare setting.

When to Complete the Practicum. Students complete a practicum at different times in their graduate work, depending on the availability of practicum sites, coursework schedules, and assistantship responsibilities. Many students complete a practicum during fall of their second year, but this is not the only option. A practicum usually requires the student to be available 2 or 3 full days per week. Students register for HDFS 7210: Problems in Human Development and Family Science as one of their regular courses during the semester of their practicum. Students who have completed a child life practicum prior to admission will have the option to complete an additional practicum during their graduate program, in consultation with the Child Life Program Director.

Practicum Application Process. Each hospital has different application requirements for a child life practicum. It is the responsibility of students to apply to practicum programs by the application

deadline. Many students complete a practicum in hospitals near Athens (including Atlanta and Macon), but completing a practicum at another location during the summer between a student's first and second years is also an option. Students are not limited to any particular hospital or program for their practicum. The Child Life Program Director and Child Life Coordinator will work closely with each student to help find the practicum placement that best meets his/her needs.

6.3 Child Life Internship

A child life internship is a required component of the MS in Child Life program. An internship allows students to work intensively with Certified Child Life Specialists in healthcare settings and to develop clinical skills in preparation, developmental assessments, support groups, procedural support, normalization activities, bereavement activities, documentation, and other clinical skills important to child life. Students also work directly with patients and learn how theory is applied to child life clinical practice. The internship experience provides students with extensive hands-on clinical training, as well as the ability to develop professionalism and knowledge of child life practice.

UGA does not arrange internships for child life students, and students should be aware that child life internships are highly competitive. Students are encouraged to apply to a wide range of child life internships. Students typically apply and interview with multiple hospitals in order to secure an internship. Even though the program does not guarantee internships, the child life faculty will provide substantial support for students as they prepare their applications and get ready for interviews.

During the child life internship, students are expected to complete full-time internship hours at the hospital. Child life internships are typically 15-17 week long unpaid experiences. Interns are expected to secure and pay for housing and other living expenses while they are interning. Some, but not all, hospitals provide guidance and resources to help interns with housing. If students intern during summer semester and were on paid assistantships in fall and spring, their tuition (but not fees) is covered for summer.

Affiliation. In order to intern while in the graduate program, students must select an internship that will enter into an affiliation agreement with UGA (often called "affiliated internships"). Some hospitals are not willing to enter into affiliation agreements, and thus are not options for MS in Child Life students. The following hospitals have not been willing to enter into affiliation agreements with UGA in the recent past. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that hospital requirements for affiliation may change over time.

- Inova Children's Hospital (Falls Church, VA)
- St. Jude Children's Hospital (Memphis, TN)
- All hospitals in North Carolina

In addition, Children's Hospital of Georgia (Augusta, GA) does not offer child life internships to students outside the UGA Joint undergraduate program.

When to Intern. Students are eligible to participate in a child life internship upon completion of their program of study requirements. Most students complete their internship during the summer of their second year, but fall and spring internships are also available. An internship is a full-time commitment; students cannot complete non-internship coursework and are not eligible for a graduate assistantship while on internship. Keep in mind that students must still enroll and register for internship hours at the University of Georgia during their internship.

Internship Application Process. In order to secure a child life internship, students will need to find and apply to programs, interview with hospital staff, and be extended a formal offer into the internship program. Students will research various child life internship programs in order to determine which programs and hospitals best suit their needs and interests. The Child Life Program Director and the Child Life Clinical Coordinator will provide input on each student's list of possible hospitals and will alert students if they have identified a hospital where UGA cannot complete an affiliation agreement.

In order to apply, students complete and submit the **Internship Readiness Common Application** (available online at <https://www.childlife.org/certification/become-certified/clinical-internship/internship-readiness-common-application>), along with any supplemental application materials individual hospitals may require. Once the completed application has been received, hospital staff will screen applicants and contact the students who may be a good fit for their internship for interviews.

Interviews may take place on the hospital campus or may be offered via Zoom and other technologies. After the interview process is complete, hospital staff extend offers to selected applicants on a standard offer date as set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). Students have the option to accept or decline each hospital that has offered them an internship.

Completing Affiliation Agreements. An affiliation agreement is a legal agreement between the University of Georgia and the hospital where the internship will take place concerning the student's role and educational goals throughout the internship. This legal document must be completed and signed by both UGA and the hospital prior to starting an internship. As soon as the student has accepted a child life internship offer, the student will work with child life faculty to complete an affiliation agreement with the hospital, unless UGA has a pre-existing agreement with that hospital. The process can be time consuming and arduous, and students should provide contact information for their internship coordinator to the Child Life Program Director as soon as they accept an internship placement, so we can begin the agreement process. ***The agreement must be signed and executed by both UGA and the hospital prior to starting the internship.***

Previous Child Life Internships. Some students may have completed a child life internship prior to their studies at the University of Georgia. Students who have already completed a child life internship prior to admission to the graduate program will not be expected to complete a second internship. Instead, they will take additional coursework that fits with their academic and career goals. This additional coursework will be selected in consultation with the Child Life Program Director and Child Life Clinical Coordinator.

7. Professional Requirements for the MS in Child Life Degree

MS in Child Life students are required to complete and document a series of professional requirements that will prepare them to be successful in their child life career post-graduation. The Professional Requirements are intended to familiarize students with the child life field, provide opportunities for them to network with child life specialists, and enable them to build a professional portfolio of experiences that will prepare them for the child life field.

The requirements must be completed before the final defense of the thesis or clinical project. Students will share their online portfolio and highlights of their professional accomplishments at the final defense meeting.

Advisory committee members will sign the **Master of Science in Child Life Professional Requirements Approval Form (Appendix D)** approving the student's completion of these requirements. After obtaining signed approval from the advisory committee, the student is responsible for submitting the signed form to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Professional requirements for MS in Child Life students are as follows:

- Become a student member of the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) during fall semester of their first year, and maintain active student membership throughout the degree program
- Attend the ACLP annual conference (at the end of the first year)
- Attend the 2-day Beyond the Classroom seminar at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- Attend the child life study tour in the first and second years
- Create and present an in-service training workshop related to child life (minimum of 1 hour; can take place in a course, conference, or community setting)
- Complete a child life practicum or a directed study with children (minimum of 100 hours)
- Create an online portfolio based on the ACLP competencies for certified child life specialists

All of these requirements must be completed during the master's degree; experiences completed before beginning the MS in Child Life are also helpful, but will not count for these requirements. The following is additional information about some of the professional development requirements:

7.1 Student Membership in the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP)

Students in the Master of Science in Child Life program are required to join the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP), which is the professional organization in the field of child life. Students should join this organization as soon as they begin their studies and are expected to maintain membership throughout the duration of their master's program. Students pay an annual membership fee to join the ACLP (\$72/year for students). Members receive a monthly newsletter concerning child life topics, have access to important literature online, and are eligible for reduced ACLP conference rates. Members are also able to read and participate in ACLP Connect online, which provides ways for students to gain valuable information on issues and topics in child life, communicate with professionals in the field, and view current job openings. In addition to ACLP, students may also choose to join regional child life organizations, such as the Florida Association of Child Life Professionals (FACLP) and the Southeastern Association of Child Life Professionals (SEACLP).

7.2 ACLP Conference

Professional conferences are important opportunities for students to expand their knowledge of the theory and practice of child life, to develop their own professionalism, and to build networks in child life prior to completing the child life internship. Students are required to attend a professional conference in child life during the MS in Child Life program. Students are *very strongly encouraged* to attend the annual Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) conference to meet this requirement.

In addition to the ACLP annual conference, regional child life associations also hold annual conferences that can be excellent professional development opportunities for MS in Child Life students. These conferences should be considered an addition to, not a replacement for, attending the ACLP conference except under unusual circumstances. Students should talk with the Child Life Program Director and Child Life Clinical Coordinator early in their first year about conference attendance plans. Students are encouraged to apply for departmental funds to help offset the cost of conference attendance.

7.3 Presentation or In-Service Training Workshop

Students are expected to deliver at least one presentation or in-service training on a topic related to child life. This presentation could be a guest lecture in a Department of Human Development and Family Science undergraduate course, a presentation to faculty and staff, a presentation to a local high school or community group, or a poster or workshop presentation at a child life related conference. Previously, students have presented at the Florida Association of Child Life Professionals (FACLP) conference and have shared poster presentations at the ACLP conference. Students have also delivered guest lectures in a wide range of HDFS classes on a variety of topics. Participating in presentations, trainings, and conferences allows students to share knowledge, practice presentation style, and develop leadership skills.

7.4 Beyond the Classroom

Students are required to attend the annual two-day Beyond the Classroom child life seminar at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) during either their first or second year of the MS in Child Life program. This seminar typically occurs during the fall of each year. Students register individually for the seminar following CHOA's registration guidelines.

7.5 Forms

Form Name	Due	Link
Master of Science in Child Life Professional Requirements Approval Form	<i>Prior to defense of clinical project or thesis.</i>	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_Professional_Requirements.docx

8. Graduate Student Annual Evaluation

All graduate students will be evaluated annually for their performance and progress in meeting the program of study/coursework and professional requirements of their degree. This evaluation will take place at a meeting of HDFS graduate faculty held in the Spring semester. Each student will prepare and submit the required forms and materials described below in Section 8.1. Students will receive developmental feedback from the graduate faculty after the evaluation meeting.

Each student will be evaluated initially by their major professor and advisory committee. If the student has not formalized an advisory committee, the evaluation will be completed by the major professor or by the initial advisor. The major professor (or initial advisor) is responsible for summarizing the student's evaluation materials, and presenting the information along with their evaluation rating recommendation to the graduate faculty.

Recommendations for students' annual evaluation will be approved by the graduate faculty during the Spring semester meeting held in March or April. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the major professor (or initial advisor) will prepare an evaluation letter to be sent to the student by the end of the Spring semester.

8.1 Required Evaluation Forms and Materials

At the start of the Spring semester, graduate students are required to complete and submit the following:

- A current Curriculum Vita (CV) documenting all of the student's scholarly accomplishments.
- A copy of their UGA Elements Report documenting all activities and accomplishments for the previous calendar year. <https://elements.uga.edu/>
- The Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students survey capturing all accomplishments for the previous calendar year. The link will be provided by the Graduate Program Administrator prior to the end of fall semester.
- The **Annual Progression toward Degree** form completed by the major professor. https://www.fcs.uga.edu/faculty_staff_resources/policies-and-procedures/annual-progress-evaluation-for-facs-graduate-students
- For students on an assistantship, the Graduate Assistantship Performance Evaluation completed at the end of the fall semester and preliminary feedback on performance during the spring semester will also be taken in consideration. https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Graduate_Assistant_Performance_Evaluation_FINAL.pdf

8.2 Evaluation Ratings

Each student's progress shall be evaluated using the following 4-level classification system:

- Satisfactory (the expected norm)
- Satisfactory with concerns (a plan for improvement is imposed)
- Unsatisfactory (a timeline for improvement is imposed)
- Dismissal

In general, the following are the criteria for each rating:

Satisfactory students are:

- Completing 12 hours of coursework per semester with mostly A's and no grade lower than B in each course (excluding students who have completed coursework and may only be taking a minimum number of hours to be in compliance with the Graduate School's continuous enrollment policy OR part-time students who are taking only 3-6 hours per semester).
- Meeting the requirements of specific courses.
- Completing programmatic milestones in a timely manner (e.g., identification of major professor and formation of committee, portfolio activities/approval, comprehensive examination, thesis/dissertation proposal, etc).
- Engaged in appropriate scholarly activities, depending on their stage in the program (e.g., attending conferences appropriate to student's academic level, making presentations, producing publications, working on thesis/dissertation).
- Engaged in the appropriate clinical work or internship (if appropriate for their program of study) and performing those roles in a satisfactory manner.
- Performing their GTA, GRA, or GA role in a satisfactory manner.
- Performing their instructor role (if applicable) in a satisfactory manner.
- Other criteria the faculty may feel is appropriate to assess for a given student.

Satisfactory with concerns students are *to some extent* falling short on one or more of the above criteria.

Unsatisfactory students are *significantly* falling short on one or more of the above criteria.

8.3 Remediation and Dismissal

Students who receive a rating of satisfactory with concerns or unsatisfactory will be provided with a detailed action plan and timeline intended to support continued progress and success in the graduate program. The plan is designed as a professional development opportunity that provides structure, guidance, and resources to help strengthen key areas and build on existing accomplishments.

The student is expected to return to satisfactory progress no later than the next evaluation period. A student is subject to dismissal from the program after receiving two unsatisfactory annual evaluations in a row.

The graduate faculty may also recommend dismissal for students who are falling short in a major way despite previous remediation OR when there is a transgression that is serious enough to warrant dismissal without a plan for remediation first being put into place.

Students may be placed on probation or dismissed by their academic program at the end of any semester for the following reasons:

1. Failure to pass comprehensive or other required examinations
2. Inadequate academic progress
3. Failure to meet program requirements (academic, professional)
4. Violation of ethical (professional) standards in program's handbook (or professional society)
5. No clear path to degree (see below)

Graduate students who cannot identify a major professor (excluding students on rotations) or who cannot form an advisory committee shall be placed on a status called "No clear path to degree completion." This status is distinct from "Not in good standing", which refers to academic status. Students will be given one semester

after being placed on this status by their unit/program to identify a major professor or form a committee. Directors of graduate studies should work closely with the student to try to rectify the problem. If the situation is not resolved during this semester, the student can be dismissed from the program.

Students with a cumulative graduate course GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive terms are placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. They then must make a 3.0 or higher GPA (in graduate courses) every succeeding semester until the cumulative graduate GPA is 3.0 or above. If they make below a 3.0 semester graduate GPA while on probation, they are dismissed. When students repeat a graduate course, the last grade will be utilized to calculate the cumulative graduate GPA that is used for probation, dismissal, admission to candidacy and graduation. Grades of S, U, I, and V will not be used in calculating the cumulative graduate average. However, when a grade of I converts to F, this may result in an action of probation or dismissal for the semester in which the conversion takes place, even if the student is not registered for the semester in which it converted.

For more details, please visit the Graduate School's policy on Probation and Dismissal:

<https://policy.uga.edu/policies#/programs/SJodDP0ua?group=Academic%20Regulations&bc=true&bcCurrent=Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=programs&bc=true&bcCurrent=Probation%20%26%20Dismissal&bcGroup=Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=programs>

9. Grievance Policy

Graduate students are encouraged to utilize the various resources available through the University and Graduate School to address concerns or conflicts. The College of Family and Consumer Sciences is committed to providing multiple avenues for students to resolve issues in a fair and supportive manner.

In general, graduate students in need of assistance for resolving problems, grievances, and disagreements should follow this conflict resolution pathway:

1. Your Adviser
2. Program Director
3. Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Head
4. College-level Administrator:
 - a. Academic/classroom issues: Assistant Dean for Academic Programs
 - b. Research-related issues: Associate Dean for Research
5. UGA Graduate School Associate Dean.

In many cases, relatively minor conflicts can be resolved through clear communication with your advisor (e.g., clarifying expectations, establishing working arrangements). The Director of Graduate Studies and Department Head are also available to provide consultation, advice, or mediation to facilitate outcomes amenable to all parties.

For more serious or sensitive matters where direct engagement with an advisor may not be appropriate, students are encouraged to first review procedures outlined in their program handbook as well as consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Head. Should the issue not be resolved at this level, the student and/or the Director of Graduate Studies should contact the appropriate the appropriate college administrator.

For more details, please visit the **FACS Guidelines for Resolving Problems, Grievances, and Disagreements**: https://www.fcs.uga.edu/faculty_staff_resources/facs-guidelines-for-resolving-problems-grievances-and-disagreements#top

9.1 Academic Appeals

If there is a concern related to an **academic decision**, students should refer to the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) academic appeals policy, which outlines the appropriate procedures: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/ssac/academic-resources-academic-appeals>

In addition, the University of Georgia Graduate School's appeals policy may also apply: <https://policy.uga.edu/policies#/programs/Skqcrwu06?bc=true&bcCurrent=Appeals&bcGroup=Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=programs>

These policies provide guidance on the formal appeals process and take precedence over the grievance procedures described in the previous section.

10. Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships are funded through several sources, including (a) state money budgeted to the department by the college; (b) department funds generated from faculty external funding (e.g., salary savings; indirect costs); (c) Graduate School funding; and (d) faculty grant-funded projects.

The rules and regulations that govern the awarding and administration of graduate assistantships at the University of Georgia are described at

https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/Hk_SqSuOC?q=graduate%20assistant&&limit=20&skip=0&bc=true&bcCurrent=Graduate%20Assistantships&bcItemType=programs

10.1 Awards and Expectations

Assistantships are awarded to both incoming and continuing students. Assistantships generally are awarded for a term of one academic year (10 months; August – May) and are not provided during summer semester. The possibility for summer support depends on the availability of funding. Some assistantships are awarded for a term of one fiscal year (12 months; July – June), depending on the funding source. It is expected that students with positive annual evaluations on both scholarly work and assistantship work may receive assistantships funded by the department for up to two years at the master's level

Students on an assistantship are employees of the University, with either a 33% (with 13 hours per week obligation), 40% (with 16 hours per week obligation), or 50% (with 20 hours per week obligation) appointment. The dean is responsible for setting the annual stipend rate for assistantships within the college. This rate must be equivalent to or higher than the University minimum rate. The Graduate School collects and publishes Graduate Assistant stipend rates annually at:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=f4d2a83b3e874d0a9294b0e47bdeb4b1>

Students who are away from campus for internships, remote practica, or are away from campus during the academic term gathering thesis or dissertation data are not eligible for department-funded assistantships.

A student who holds an assistantship must register for a minimum of 12 hours of graduate credit fall and spring semesters and 9 hours of graduate credit during the summer semester.

Each semester, MS students on assistantship are required to register for 3 credit hours of HDFS 7005 (if MS student), in the section (CRN) under the Director of Graduate Studies. There is no additional classroom obligation or work obligation for the 7005/9005 course, beyond completing your assistantship assignments.

10.2 Assignment

Graduate assistantships are assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the faculty, and approved by the Department Head. Faculty needs, and preferences are matched to skills and preferences of students insofar as is possible. Assignment preference is given to faculty who are funding assistantships with grants as long as overall department needs are not placed in jeopardy.

The following are descriptions and responsibilities of each type of graduate assistantship:

- Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) typically assist with teaching-related responsibilities, assist in classrooms or labs, meet with students, and grade papers.

All GTAs are required to fulfill the requirements set forth in UGA's Graduate TA Policy, including attendance at the TA Orientation, completion of GRSC 7770 or equivalent course, and demonstration of language requirement (international students). For more information regarding the TA Policy, see <https://www.ctl.uga.edu/grad-student/ta-policy/>

Also, the University of Georgia is legally and ethically obligated to protect the confidentiality of students' records. The Office of the Registrar provides several resources to help faculty and staff learn about student privacy rights and responsibilities under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Each new employee, and this includes student TAs and those co-teaching, who will have access to any student information system is required to complete the FERPA quiz and certification. For more information and to access the FERPA quiz, visit: <https://reg.uga.edu/student-records/ferpa/>.

- Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) have research related responsibilities and typically do not engage in teaching-related activities. For a GRA to serve as a Teaching Assistant, they must meet all qualification requirements outlined in the TA Policy, and they must be supported by a funding source that allows for instructional responsibilities.
- General Graduate Assistants (GAs) are all other students who receive assistantships that are not specifically designated for teaching or research. GAs have varied responsibilities as defined by their supervisor. These may include research not related to their own research interests, production of scholarly materials, and may include assisting with teaching-related responsibilities. For a GA to serve as a Teaching Assistant, they must meet all qualification requirements outlined in the TA Policy, and they must be supported by a funding source that allows for instructional responsibilities.

10.3 Evaluation

Graduate Assistantship Performance Evaluations are required by the college at the end of each semester. Toward the end of each semester, the Graduate Program Administrator distributes the evaluation form to faculty who have graduate assistants. The evaluation is to be completed by the supervising faculty member. The evaluation is returned to the Graduate Program Administrator and used as part of the graduate student's annual evaluation to determine assistantship award and assignments for the following year. See Section 8.0 on annual evaluations for a fuller discussion of this process.

10.4 Continuation

The continuation of an assistantship is dependent upon available funding, and determined by the assistantship performance evaluations and annual evaluation (see Section 8.0). An assistantship should not be awarded to a student who is not making clear progress toward the requirements for graduation or fails to perform tasks associated with the assistantship. Every effort will be made to inform students about funding for the following year before the end of spring semester. Continuation of an assistantship may not be offered by any faculty member except in consultation with the Department Head and the Director of Graduate Studies.

11. Graduation

11.1 Timing

An application for graduation must be filed with the Graduate School **no later than Friday of the second full week (the first full week for summer) of classes in the semester of the anticipated graduation date.**

All requirements for the degree must be completed and reported to the Graduate School no later than one week prior to graduation. A student must enroll for a minimum of three hours of credit the semester in which graduation requirements are completed unless additional stipulations are required by other units of the university.

Source: <https://policy.uga.edu/policies/#/programs/Hycl4UoKa>

The deadline to apply for graduation is available at: <http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/important-dates-deadlines/>

11.2 Forms

To apply to graduate:

- Log into Athena (<https://athena.uga.edu>);
- Select the "Student" tab à click "Graduation" à click "Apply to Graduate;"

Follow the directions provided and see more detailed instructions here:

<https://reg.uga.edu/student-records/graduation/apply-to-graduate/>

12. Graduates of the Child Life Program

Graduates of the Master of Science in Child Life program have obtained positions within various hospitals, pediatric hospice settings, and other child or family support organizations. The vast majority of child life graduates obtain jobs as child life specialists in healthcare settings such as Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Texas Children's Hospital, Duke Children's Hospital, Children's Health in Dallas, Cook Children's Hospital in Ft. Worth, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Children's Memorial Hermann in Houston, Colorado Children's Hospital, and many others. Other positions our graduates have held include community-physician liaison, national outreach coordinator for local hospitals, extension agent, program coordinator of Children's Miracle Network, hospice specialist, and director of marketing and public relations at the Georgia Transplant Foundation. By pursuing a degree in child life within a Department of Human Development and Family Science, students are able to study diverse issues regarding children and families, while maximizing their career potential.

13. Appendix

Form/Template	Link to Form/Template	Section Referenced
A1. Recommended Timeline of Course Scheduling—Child Life	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Approved_MSCL_Program_of_Study_-_2_options_(January_2024)_1.pdf	4
A2. Program of Study: Child Life—MS	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/POS_-_MS-CL.docx	4
B1. Approval of Thesis Proposal	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS_E1_Approval_of_Thesis_Proposal.docx	5
B2. Request for the Announcement of Master's Defense	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/HDFS_E2_Request_for_the_Announcement_of_Master_Defense.docx	5
C1. Approval of Clinical Project Proposal	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_Approval_of_Clinical_Project_Proposal.docx	5
C2. Child Life Non-thesis Clinical Project and Presentation	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_Nonthesis_Clinical_Project_Approval_Form.docx	5
D. MSCL Professional Requirements Approval Form	https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_Professional_Requirements.docx	7

A1. Recommended Timeline of Course Scheduling—Child Life



**Human Development
and Family Science**
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

HDFS Master of Science in Child Life – Program of Study (Internship Summer of 2nd Year)

First Year					
Fall Semester		Spring Semester		Summer Semester	
Credits	Course	Credits	Course	Credits	Course
3	HDFS 6810 Hospitalized Child and the Family	3	HDFS 6640 Theories of Family Systems	3	HDFS 6140E Medical Terminology for the Child Life Profession
3	HDFS 6830S Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Across the Lifespan	3	HDFS 6820 Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings	6	HDFS 7210 Practicum AND/OR HDFS 7000 Research credits AND/OR HDFS 7005 Assistantship credits
3	HDFS 6100 Theories of Human Development	3	HDFS 6800 Research Methods		
3	HDFS 6080 Contemporary Topics in Child Development: Risk and Resilience	3	HDFS 7130S Therapeutic Benefits of Play		
1	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar		
1 (14)	GRSC 7001 GradFIRST seminar				
Second Year					
Fall Semester		Spring Semester		Summer Semester	
Credits	Course	Credits	Course	Credits	Course
6	HDFS 7210 Problems in HDFS (hospital practicum) OR HDFS 7010 Directed Study in HDFS (3 credits) plus a Graduate elective course*	6	HDFS 7020 Non-Thesis Clinical Project in Child Life OR HDFS 7300 Master's Thesis	12	HDFS 7930 Hospital Internship in Child Life
3	HDFS 6900 Child Life Research and Issues seminar	3	HDFS 6910 Early/Middle Childhood		
3	HDFS 7170 Introduction to Applied Statistics in Human Development and Family Science	3	HDFS 6890S More than a Four-Legged Friend: The Benefits of Animal-Assisted Interventions OR Graduate elective course*		
1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	(12)	

*Note: This graduate elective course is expected to be a regularly-scheduled course, rather than a directed study. The course can be in HDFS or any other appropriate department at the university.



**Human Development
and Family Science**
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

HDFS Master of Science in Child Life – Program of Study (Internship in Fall of Year 3)

First Year					
Fall Semester		Spring Semester		Summer Semester	
Credits	Course	Credits	Course	Credits	Course
3	HDFS 6810 Hospitalized Child and the Family	3	HDFS 6640 Theories of Family Systems	3	HDFS 6140E Medical Terminology for the Child Life Profession
3	HDFS 6830 Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Across the Lifespan	3	HDFS 6820 Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings	6	HDFS 7210 Problems in HDFS (hospital practicum) AND/OR HDFS 7000 Research credits AND/OR HDFS 7005 Assistantship credits
3	HDFS 6100 Theories of Human Development	3	HDFS 6800 Research Methods		
3	HDFS 6080 Contemporary Topics in Child Development: Risk and Resilience	3	HDFS 7130 Therapeutic Benefits of Play		
1	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar		
1 (14)	GRSC 7001 GradFIRST seminar			(9)	
Second Year					
Fall Semester		Spring Semester		Summer Semester	
Credits	Course	Credits	Course	Credits	Course
6	HDFS 7210 Problems in HDFS (hospital practicum) OR HDFS 7010 Directed Study in HDFS (3 credits) plus a Graduate elective course*	6	HDFS 7020 Non-Thesis Clinical Project in Child Life OR HDFS 7300 Master's Thesis	3	HDFS 7020 Non-Thesis Clinical Project in Child Life OR HDFS 7300 Master's Thesis
3	HDFS 6900 Child Life Research and Issues seminar	3	HDFS 6910 Early/Middle Childhood	6	HDFS 7000 Research hours AND/OR HDFS 7005 Assistantship hours
3	HDFS 7170 Introduction to Applied Statistics in Human Development and Family Science	3	HDFS 6890S More than a Four-Legged Friend: The Benefits of Animal-Assisted Intervention OR Graduate elective course*		
1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	1 (13)	HDFS 8910 Professional seminar	(9)	
Year 3 – Fall Semester Only					
Credits	Course				
12	HDFS 7930 Hospital Internship in Child Life				

*Note: This graduate elective course is expected to be a regularly-scheduled course, rather than a directed study. The course can be in HDFS or any other appropriate department at the university.

A2. Program of Study: Child Life—MS

The following form must be completed and submitted to the department for review and approval prior to the student completing the Graduate School online program of study form in DegreeWorks.

Student's Name: _____ **Date of Submission:** _____

By completing and submitting this form, the student acknowledges that (1) the major professor has reviewed and approved this program of study, and (2) it was shared with the student's committee for their review and approval.

Course Number and Title	Credits	Grade	Semester/Year
GRSC 7001: GradFIRST Seminar	1		
HDFS 6080: Contemporary Topics in Child Development: Risk and Resilience	3		
HDFS 6100: Theories of Human Development	3		
HDFS 6140E: Medical Terminology for the Child Life Profession	3		
HDFS 6640: Issues in Family Relationships	3		
HDFS 6800: Research Methods	3		
HDFS 6810: Psychosocial Care of the Hospitalized Child and the Family	3		
HDFS 6820: Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings	3		
HDFS 6830S: Grief, Loss, and Bereavement	3		
HDFS 6900: Seminar in Human Development and Family Science	3		
HDFS 6910: Early and Middle Childhood Development	3		
HDFS 7130S: Therapeutic Benefits of Play	3		
Methodology Course ^a	3		
General Elective:	3		
HDFS 7000: Master's Research ^b	6		
HDFS 7010: Directed Study in Human Development and Family Science ^b			
HDFS 7210: Practicum in Child Life ^b			
HDFS 7020: Non-Thesis Clinical Project in Child Life ^c	6		
HDFS 7300: Master's Thesis ^c			
HDFS 7930: Hospital Internship in Child Life	12		
HDFS 8910: Current Research and Issues in Human Development and Family Science ^d	4		
TOTAL	65		

^a Enroll in either HDFS 7170 (Introduction to Applied Statistics in Human Development and Family Science) or a qualitative course (e.g., HDFS 8800) to meet the research and methodology requirement.

^b At least 6 credit hours of 7000/7010/7210 must be completed. Students may take any combination of these courses to meet program of study requirements. A maximum of 6 hours of 7000 may be applied towards the credit hours needed to graduate. List each course by semester taken in the appended table.

^c Students can choose between 7020 and 7300 for their program of study. At least 3 hours of one of these courses must be included in the final program of study. A maximum of 3 hours of 7300 may be applied towards the credit hours needed to graduate. If additional credit hours of 7020 or 7300 are completed, list each course by semester taken in the appended table.

^d Students will enroll in 1 credit hour of 8910 each semester. List each 8910 section taken in the appended table.

Submit this form to HDFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu) after approval by the advisory committee.

List each HDFS 7000, 7010, 7210, 7020, 7300 and/or 8910 course planned or completed by semester.

[illegible]

B1. Approval of Thesis Proposal

Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia

Student Name: _____ ID#: _____

Thesis
Title: _____

Proposal Meeting
Date: _____

Advisory Committee Approval

The proposed thesis project has been approved by the advisory committee. Any changes must be approved by the advisory committee.

Major Professor	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Director of Graduate Studies	Signature	Date
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Submit the completed form (including adding the names of those who need to sign the form) to the HDFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu).

***In your email, provide the name and email for each person who needs to sign the form.
The Graduate Program Administrator will save the file as a PDF and
circulate it via DocuSign for signatures.***

B2. Request for the Announcement of Master's Defense

Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia

Student Name: _____

ID # (81): _____

Exam Date: _____

Exam Start
Time: _____

Location: _____

Title of Thesis: _____

The program of study has been approved by the advisory committee. Any changes must be approved by the advisory committee.

Major Professor	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Director of Graduate Studies	Signature	Date
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***At least 2 weeks before the scheduled exam date, submit the completed form
(including adding the names of those who need to sign the form)
to the HDFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu).
In your email, provide the name and email for each person who needs to sign the form.
The Graduate Program Administrator will save the file as a PDF and circulate it via DocuSign for
signatures.***

C2. Approval of Clinical Project Proposal

Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia

Student Name: _____ ID#: _____

Clinical Project
Title: _____

Proposal Meeting
Date: _____

Advisory Committee Approval

The proposed thesis project has been approved by the advisory committee. Any changes must be approved by the advisory committee.

Major Professor	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Director of Graduate Studies	Signature	Date
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Submit the completed form (including adding the names of those who need to sign the form) to the HDFFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu).

***In your email, provide the name and email for each person who needs to sign the form.
The Graduate Program Administrator will save the file as a PDF and
circulate it via DocuSign for signatures.***

C2. Master of Science Non-thesis Clinical Project and Presentation Exam Form

Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia

Student Name: _____ ID#: _____

Project Title: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Advisory Committee Approval

The student's clinical project has been approved by the advisory committee. Any changes must be approved by the advisory committee.

Major Professor	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Child Life Program Director	Signature	Date
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Submit the completed form (including adding the names of those who need to sign the form) to the HDFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu).

In your email, provide the name and email for each person who needs to sign the form. The Graduate Program Administrator will save the file as a PDF and circulate it via DocuSign for signatures.

D. MSCL Professional Requirements Approval Form

Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia

Student Name: _____ ID#: _____

Child Life Professional Requirements

Requirement	Date Completed
Active student membership in the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP)	
Attend the ACLP annual conference	
Attend the 2-day Beyond the Classroom seminar at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta	
Attend the child life study tour in both first and second years of the program	
Create and present an in-service training workshop related to child life (minimum of 1 hour; can take place in a course, conference, or community setting)	
Complete a child life practicum or a directed study with children (minimum 100 hours)	
Create an online portfolio based on the ACLP competencies for Certified Child Life Specialists (ACLP Competencies)	

Advisory Committee Approval

The student's online portfolio of professional requirements has been reviewed and approved by the advisory committee. Any changes must be approved by the advisory committee.

Major Professor	Signature	Date
Committee Member	Signature	Date
Committee Member	Signature	Date
Child Life Program Director	Signature	Date

Submit the completed form (including adding the names of those who need to sign the form) to the HDFFS Graduate Program Administrator (HDFSGradProgram@uga.edu).

***In your email, provide the name and email for each person who needs to sign the form.
The Graduate Program Administrator will save the file as a PDF and
circulate it via DocuSign for signatures.***